

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of responding to a search request in a computer network, the method comprising:

5 receiving client data from a plurality of client computers, the client data being indicative of consumer preferred links for keywords employed to perform searches across different search engines on the Internet;

receiving a keyword from a search engine; and

10 providing the search engine a plurality of links pointing to at least one document on the Internet, at least one link in the plurality of links determined to be relevant to the keyword based on the client data.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising creating a search model using the client data, the search model being configured to provide a score indicative of a relevance of a link to the keyword.

15 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the client data are stored in a database in a message server computer in communication with a message delivery program generating client data.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

informing the search engine of a best layout in presenting the plurality of links.

20 5. The method of claim 1 wherein links associated with the keyword are assigned corresponding scores using a search model.

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

including the plurality of links in a search result provided to a first client computer of a consumer.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein a link in the plurality of links point to a web page.

5 8. The method of claim 6 wherein the first client computer does not have a client program in communication with a server computer providing the plurality of links to the search engine.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the client data comprise consumer navigation history.

10 10. The method of claim 1 wherein the client data comprise consumer purchase behavior.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one link is determined to be relevant to the keyword based on a number of times consumers clicked on the at least one link.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one link is determined to be relevant
15 to the keyword based on a number of times consumers made a purchase by following the at least one link.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one link is determined to be relevant to the keyword based on an amount of time consumers spent viewing a web page pointed to by the at least one link.

20 14. A system for providing search results, the system comprising:

a plurality of client computers, each of the client computers including a message delivery program that is configured to record client data indicative of consumer preferred links for keywords employed to perform searches across different search engines; and

a message server computer configured to receive client data from the message
5 delivery program in each of the client computers, the message server computer storing a ranking of links associated with particular keywords, the ranking being based on client data.

15. The system of claim 14 further comprising:

a search engine configured to receive a search request for a keyword from a first
10 client computer, the search engine being configured to provide the keyword to the message server computer and to receive a set of links from the message server computer, the links in the set of links determined to be relevant to the keyword based on the client data.

16. The system of claim 14 wherein the search engine is configured to receive
15 information on a best layout to be used in presenting the set of links from the message server computer.

17. The system of claim 14 wherein the links in the set of links point to web pages on the Internet.

18. The system of claim 14 further comprising:

20 a search model created using the client data and configured to provide a score for a link, the score being indicative of relevance of the link to a keyword.

19. A method of responding to a search request, the method comprising:

receiving a search request for a keyword from a client computer; and

providing a search result responsive to the search request, the search result including at least one link that is determined to be relevant to the keyword based on

5 consumer actions with respect to the link as displayed on different search results from different search engines.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein the link is determined to be relevant based on client data received from a plurality of client programs provided to consumers in exchange for a product provided free of charge or at a reduced cost.